

The Mercy of God Almighty, Part 4 - Romans 9:14-16 - July 29th, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled; "The Mercy of God Almighty."
- Up to this point we've had several unanswered questions that the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, has risen from the pages of scripture to answer.
- At this point, we have another question that gets answered, and to say it's a doozy, would be a gross understatement. It's found in verses 14-16.

Is God Unjust (Verses 14-16)

(14) What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! (15) For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." (16) It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

- v14 Paul rhetorically asks then answers the question of "what then shall we say? Is God unjust? Answer, not at all! God is just, righteous & fair.
- v15 He talks about how that God told Moses He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and compassion on whom He will have compassion.
- v16 He goes on to say that it doesn't, therefore, depend on neither a man's desire, nor a man's effort, but it only depends on the mercy of God.

- It's important that we know why Paul would quote from the account in the book of Exodus, which took place after Israel's sin with the golden calf.
- The reason this is so important is that Paul will prove not only that God is merciful, but in so doing, he will also prove that God can be trusted too.
- In order to prove this, Paul will need to call Moses to the witness stand, as it were, so he can testify that God is just, thus, a God we can trust.

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a brief moment as I attempt to give you the backstory as to what happened leading up to God showing mercy.
- Moses comes down from Mt. Sinai with two tablets of stone with the inscription of God's law, which was written by the very finger of God Himself.
- The problem is that instead of being met by an eager excitement, he's met with unspeakable rebellion, so much so God tells him what awaits him.

Exodus 32:7-8 NKJV And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. (8) They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!' "

- You'll forgive my noticing anything so humorous in something so serious, but I find it rather interesting that God totally disowns His own people.
- He says to Moses, "go, get down for 'your' people whom 'you' brought out of the land of Egypt." It seems that God wants nothing to do with them.
- This is evidenced by what God tells Moses next, which is that He has pretty much had it with them, and He is going to completely destroy them.

Exodus 32:9-10 NKJV And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people! (10) Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

- Think about this, God is actually telling Moses to get out of His way so He can zap these stiff-necked people and start all over with Moses instead.
- I must confess If God were to say this to me I'd have said; "ok!" This is probably why God would never say this to me. He could say it to Moses.
- I'm of the belief that God foreknew how Moses would response prior to His saying this to him, which is most likely the reason that he said it to him.

- I also believe that God foreknew what Moses would ask of Him concerning His people, which by the way, Moses gives God's people back to Him.

Exodus 32:11 NKJV Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

- Not only does Moses plead with God to have mercy on the children of Israel and not destroy them, he echoes what Paul said back in verse three.

Romans 9:3 NIV For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race,

Exodus 32:32 NKJV Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

- I would suggest, like Moses, the Apostle Paul knows that their God is merciful, compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love.

Exodus 34:5-6 NIV Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. (6) And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

- This brings us back to our question, which still remains on the table and has yet to be answered, namely, is this God we serve really a fair God.
- Once again, we have another one of those questions that's like the ones before it, like why would a God of love actually hate someone like Esau.
- I suppose you could also include questions like why does God allow bad things to happen to good people, which is one that we're able to answer.
- The common denominator in all these questions is they imply that God isn't loving, that God isn't fair, that God isn't just, and God can't be trusted.
- But, that makes God evil. It's not that God hated Esau, it's that He loved Jacob. So too is it true, God allows good things to happen to bad people.
- This answers our question, in the sense that it's not God being unfair to those who died at Mt. Sinai, it's that He's merciful to those who didn't die.

As one commentator said it; "The point is not that we should be troubled by His not having mercy on all, but rather that we should be filled with wonder and gratitude that he has compassion on some. For the context proves that none deserve it. So Paul concludes that God's sovereign choice of mercy does not... depend on man's desire (the one who wills, what we decide and want) or mans effort (the one who runs, that is, human actions that result from our desires), but on the God Who has mercy. Just as the people of God are defined by God's promise (Isaac) and God's choice (Jacob), so they are defined entirely by God's undeserved mercy (those who survived after the golden calf)."

- This is one of the main reasons that the Apostle Paul calls Moses to the witness stand by quoting from the account back in Exodus 33:19 saying:

Exodus 33:19 NKJV Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

- Here's the take away for today, which is where I'll bring it in for a close and ask this question; do you believe that God has dealt unfairly with you?
- Let me pose the same question in a different way, do you believe that God hasn't given you what you think you really deserve that He gives you?
- Could it be that you need a paradigm shift, in that instead of seeing it as, God is not being fair with you, you see it as God being merciful to you?